

## Traumatic Events

by Forlay

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> <meta name="Author">

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The young woman fidgeted nervously in her chair in the doctor's waiting room. Remarkably, it wasn't crowded that day. She'd heard stories of people having to literally wait hours before getting to see the doctors, they were in such high demand. But today her wait would only be half an hour, which she supposed was lucky. She'd never been too keen on seeing doctors, and this was her first visit to this one, if she'd had to wait for an unreasonable amount of time, she would have turned around, left the office and told her family there was no chance in Hell she'd go back.

><font> She could still do that. Tell the receptionist she had to go, then spend the morning shopping or at a movie, her family never the wiser that she'd skipped out. There'd never be a bill saying she'd been there or not, anyways. Doctors didn't charge anymore, too many people needed help, and many of them no longer had money to pay for the help they needed. Money was a rare commodity now, the national mint had been shut down long ago once the invasion had been complete. There wasn't any need for money, really. Most goods and some services were paid for in trade, but if one had nothing to trade, they weren't turned down. It was a much better Earth than the one she'd grown up in. No more wars, no hunger, no poverty, there weren't even diseases anymore. Sure, the common cold still floated around, but nothing life threatening. Cancer was gone, AIDS was gone...about the only diseases that were left were those that weren't physical, but mental. Obsessive Compulsive disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, depression and panic attacks were common place.<font>  
><font> "Miss," the nurse said, standing directly in front of the

woman. She'd apparently been calling for her for several minutes.

"The doctor will see you now."<font>

><font> "Oh, yes, thank you." The woman pushed back her hair, picked up her jacket and coat meticulously and walked into the doctors office.<font>

><font> "Hello," the doctor greeted her warmly, extending his hand.

"I'm Doctor Greenway." The woman just nodded, ignoring his outstretched hand, and sat herself primly on the couch. "What's your name?" The woman mumbled something, preferring to study Doctor Greenway's plants than looking straight at the doctor and answer.

"Beg your pardon, but I didn't quite catch that."<font>

><font> The woman sat up straighter and smoothed the invisible wrinkles in her skirt. "My name is Rachel."<font>

><font> "I'm glad you're here, Rachel," Doctor Greenway told her sincerely. "What is it you'd like to talk about?"<font>

><font> Rachel shrugged. "My family wanted me to come here."<font>

><font> "Really? Why don't you tell me about your family?"<font>

><font> "I live with my mother," Rachel began slowly, trying to make sure she told the doctor every detail in the correct order. "We still live in the house I grew up in, but my two younger sisters, Jordan and Sara, have moved out."<font>

><font> "Where is your father?" Doctor Greenway interrupted.<font>

><font> "He and my mother divorced when I was young," Rachel explained.<font>

><font> "I see," the doctor said, scribbling something on a note pad. "Please, continue."<font>

><font> "Jordan moved away to another state. All the way on the other side of the country. She never calls or writes anymore, although when she first moved we received a phone call or post card every week. Sara, on the other hand, just moved to the other side of town, so Mom and I still see her regularly.<font>

><font> "I used to be engaged. I've known this wonderful guy, Tobias, for what seems like forever. We met back in 7th or 8th grade. It was practically love at first sight," she smiled at the memory. "He was so sweet, and gentle...it was hard to accept that his gentle personality was wrapped up in the body of one of nature's most perfect, beautifully designed predators." Doctor Greenway raised an eyebrow at that statement, but kept quiet, just making a note of it to himself. "Once it was all over...you know what I mean, right, Doctor? Well, once it was over, he changed back to being human, and stayed that way, just to be with me. He was so romantic. That was the day of my 20th birthday, four years ago last month. That same day, he proposed to me, giving me a small, extremely cheap ring. But I cherished it. Price didn't matter, we loved eachother, that was all that mattered that day."<font>

><font> "What happened to him? You said you used to be engaged."<font>

><font> Rachel's face clouded at the memory. "Yes. Used to be. Three months ago, though, he said I'd changed. Changed too much for him. He left. We left the apartment we'd been sharing. I went back to live with Mother, and I don't know where he went."<font>

><font> "So your mother is the one who wanted you to come here?"<font>

><font> "Yes, but I think she got the idea from Tobias. I'm sure they're still in contact with eachother, I've checked the caller ID and found his name and number on there several times. And I think Sara may have suggested it, too."<font>

><font> "Has your mother said why she wanted you to come here?"<font>

><font> Rachel shook her head, causing her long hair to shimmer down her back. "No. She just told me, 'Rachel, I want you to go see a therapist. You're worrying me. I know the past has been hard on you, and I think you need to talk to someone about it who can help you.'"<font>

><font> "Do you think you need to talk to someone?"<font>

><font> Rachel shrugged and began smoothing out her skirt again. She was sure a wrinkle was in there somewhere, and she couldn't be seen in wrinkled clothing, it wasn't dignified. "Sometimes I need to talk, sometimes I don't. There are times when the past seems to catch up with me, all at once, the terrible fighting...all that I have seen...and then, yes, I need to talk to someone. And Mother doesn't want to listen. It's too depressing for her. But I can't talk to anyone who was there with me. I can't seem weak in front of them. I'm Xena."<font>

><font> "But Rachel, surely you understand that talking about your feelings doesn't show weakness."<font>

><font> "It will to them. You don't know me, Doctor, you don't know how I'm supposed to be. I'm not supposed to get all touchy-feely. That was Cassie. Cassie was good with emotions." She paused. "You don't know Cassie, do you? Cassie was my best friend, and was there with me through it all. I could always talk to her. Her and Tobias were my confidantes. I could trust them. Could...."<font>

><font> "Why can't you now?"<font>

><font> "Because Tobias moved away. Tobias <em>abandoned<em> me, and Cassie is living her own life. She's my cousin in law now. She married Jake, my cousin on my father's side. He was there, too. And he and Cassie always liked each other. It was painfully obvious, although they tried to hide it. They married as soon as it was over. I was Cassie's maid of honor. It was a beautiful wedding, taking place in Tobias' meadow. It was a beautiful place. Perfect for a wedding. Tobias and I were going to have ours there. It was home, for him."

><font> The doctor already had some conclusions about what was wrong with this young woman. Too young, too beautiful, to deserve what she obviously had, yet these things had the habit of hitting those who least deserved them. But he wanted to push deeper, he had a feeling there was more to this story than what she said. She'd been fastidious sometimes about giving all the details she could, yet other parts of her story she'd left extremely vague. There had to be a reason for that.<font>

><font> "Rachel, you said that Tobias had been trapped in the body of one of nature's most beautiful predators, what did you mean by that?" She didn't answer. Instead she played with her hair idly, switching from twisting it around a finger, to smoothing it back down, trying to keep fly aways at bay.<font>

><font> "Rachel, can you answer me?" She shook her head. "Why not?"<font>

><font> "Because I can't. It hurts."<font>

><font> Doctor Greenway made a note, then continued. "All right. Can you tell me what 'terrible battles' you were in, then? Human controllers usually weren't involved in those." Once again, Rachel remained silent, still playing with her hair.<font>

><font> "Can you tell me if you were a controller, Rachel?" The doctor asked, trying a different approach.<font>

><font> "No, I wasn't."<font>

><font> Doctor Greenway began to realize how Rachel must have been involved, and it made the rest of her story seem believable...but

then again, she could also have been delusional. He had to have solid proof of his theory. "Then how could you have been involved in battle if you weren't a controller?" Rachel was now tugging at a loose string on her purse, sometimes trying to pull it out or break it off, sometimes smoothing it down so it wouldn't be as obvious.<font>

><font> "Do you even remember?"<font>  
><font> "Yes," she said quietly.<font>  
><font> "Does it hurt to remember?"<font>  
><font> "Yes," she repeated, even quieter this time.<font>  
><font> "I think that's all I need to hear."<font>  
><font> Rachel looked up, "Really?"<font>  
><font> "Yes."<font>  
><font> "Is Mother right? Is something wrong with me?"<font>  
  
><font> "Nothing is 'wrong' with you, Rachel. Just some disturbing events in the past have caused your mind to start functioning differently. But you do appear to have two disorders. Obsessive Compulsive, or OCD, and post traumatic stress disorder, PTSD. Have you heard of either of those?"<font>  
><font> "I know OCD, but haven't heard PTSD."<font>  
><font> "PTSD occurs when someone has experienced a traumatic event. In your case, it was the war with the Yeerks, which you were obviously involved in heavily."<font>  
><font> "But that's been over for years!" Rachel said, momentarily forgetting about wrinkles.<font>  
><font> "Sometimes the symptoms don't begin to manifest themselves for years."<font>  
><font> Rachel went back to inspecting her skirt, realizing now it was obvious she had OCD. No one should be this concerned over their appearance. She tried to force herself to look up, but couldn't until she'd run her hand over her skirt again. "What can I do?"<font>  
><font> "I'm going to give you a prescription, and I suggest you begin taking therapy for the PTSD. I've set up a group that meets once a month. They were all involved with the war somehow. It's a small group, and all of us are friends there. Another person is always welcome."<font>  
><font> Rachel nodded. "I think I'd like that."<font>  
><font> "Good." Doctor Greenway scribbled two notes for her. One giving her her prescriptions, the other giving the time and date for the next meeting. "I hope to see you there."<font>  
><font> "Thank you, Doctor," Rachel said, already beginning to feel her spirits rise. She stood up, smoothed her skirt one last time, then picked up her jacket and purse. "I guess I'll see you Tuesday."<font>  
><font> "I'm looking forward to it," the doctor told her, then escorted her to the door.<font>  
><font> He watched as she left. It wasn't often he got to brush with fame, although he'd been expecting this one for quite some time. Coincidentally, the particular meeting he'd assigned Rachel to go to was made up of only four other people, all who showed similar signs of either OCD or PTSD. A couple who'd been married for four years, a man who'd never even had a steady girl friend, and another young man who'd once been engaged but was now single. His girlfriend had obviously had mental problems, and he hadn't known how to deal with them. Amazing how traumatic events could draw people together.<font>

Author's Notes: Well, there's a new one for ya' (at least I think

it's new...haven't seen any other stories where an Animorph has a mental disorder) I hope you enjoyed it, or as much as you can enjoy my return to depressing fics. I'm already considering doing a sequel to this one...it was kind of fun to write. Very therapeutic, too, for various reasons. Let me know what you think about that sequel!\_

><em><font>BTW: There's a reason I didn't go into how the war ended, so don't complain that I didn't tell. At the moment, you'll have to come up with your own reasons unless I do that sequel. I may come out with it then.<font>\_

> <br>

End  
file.